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Alfred Rosenberg: National Socialist aesthetician

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Rosenberg's voluminous book *The Myth of the Twentieth Century* is the most important – also on issues of art – creative work of German fascism to this day. Rosenberg's influence as a leading theorist of German fascism is precisely based on the fact that, if he did not invent, then, in any case, he masterfully put into the system the following “philosophical” recipe for fascist propaganda: just leave all the glaring contradictions as they were, and mask their incompatibility under the pompous mystical names of “eternal polarity,” “primary phenomenon” of “original thinking,” etc. to give out the impression of some special profundity.

It is difficult, while reading fascist theoreticians, to remain serious, to analyze them and not just to expose them to deserved ridicule. But since in Germany millions of people, including working people, are still fanatically following this contradictory nonsense, we still consider it necessary to reveal these contradictions, especially the real social antagonisms underlying them, so that in this way we more successfully fight against fascist ideology. Due to the mystical nature of fascist theory, due to the hypnotizing influence exerted precisely by its mysticism, we must not forget that here before us are the real contradictions in the social development of imperialist monopoly capitalism in the era of the general crisis of the capitalist system, in the period of its sharply aggravated cyclical crisis.

“A mystic,” says Ludwig Feuerbach, “deals with the same objects as a simply thinking person; but a real object is for a mystic an object not as such, but as an imaginary one, and therefore an imaginary object is really an object for him.” This mystical twist, analyzed by Feuerbach on the example of Christianity, although without exposing its social roots, is also present in fascist ideology.

Let us add that this mystical sublimation is based on the fact that only partial consequences of a given phenomenon are shown, and not its real causes; as far as the reasons are generally discussed, all real socio-economic moments are eradicated from them, apologetically distorted and put upside down. It should not be forgotten, however, that these “theories” are designed primarily for the petty bourgeoisie, which, by virtue of its social position, experiences its own problems in precisely this form.

The bare content of the fascist myth is thus reduced to the following: monopoly capitalism is portrayed as if it had turned into something else – as if its preservation,

ensuring its domination through the exclusive oppression of all working people, gives something new, leads to overcoming its contradictions. The myths of the “third Reich,” “German socialism” or “Germanic democracy” aim to stupefy the working people, present them with an intensified restoration of monopoly capitalism in the form of a revolution, divert their instinctive indignation against monopoly capitalism so that it is harnessed to its triumphal chariot.

This general basic tendency of fascist theory is reflected, of course, in its aesthetics. The process of the decay of capitalism inevitably leads, in the field of all culture and in particular in the field of literature and art, to the fact that works of art are increasingly alienated from the experiences and needs of the working masses. With the emergence of a general tendency of apologetics for the capitalist system, literature and art are increasingly losing their ability to creatively respond to the real joys and sufferings of the broad masses of the working people. Even those writers who remain subjectively honest and do not stoop to conscious apologetics are helplessly tossed about in a blind alley of purely ideological criticism of the symptoms of capitalist decay. They are virtually cut off from the life of the masses. And the more honestly they experience and creatively reveal the problems of their own situation, the more alien their work should seem to the masses, who suffer from the same reasons, but in a completely different form. However, such writers are a rare exception. The vast majority of writers serve the apologetic interests of capitalism.

Purely ideological criticism of the symptoms of the decay of capitalism has developed a special term: *decadence*. From the above, it is clear that fascist aesthetics revolves around an imaginary disclosure of the causes of decadence, around an imaginary solution to its problems. This criticism of decadence is, of course, not at all original in Rosenberg compared to his predecessors, especially Nietzsche, who gave this kind of assessment of modern literature and art and who was the “classic” prototype of the aesthetics and critics of the entire imperialist period. The originality of Rosenberg is reduced here only to the shifting of accents. If the philosophers of pre-war imperialism, such as Simmel, saw here a “tragedy of culture” in general; if the theoretical champions of impressionism and expressionism (Kerr, Diebold, etc.) ascertained the fact of alienation and isolation of art in the social life of our time, but at the same time emphasized the great values of “refinement,” “concentration,” etc. (depending on the prevailing fashion at the moment); if Stefan George’s school saw here the “eternal antagonism” of “genius” and “the masses,” then Rosenberg puts forward the myth of “blood.” Decadence is “blood poisoning,” the mixing of the Nordic Germanic race with alien elements, primarily with Jewry; decadence means “hybrid,” bastard creativity; and overcoming decadence consists in freeing the people from this “hybridity.”

How this is done can be seen in the example of Nazi Germany: writers are killed or thrown into prisons, their books are burned, etc. And Goebbels declares with demagogic straightforwardness in his speech to writers that with the emergence of the “third Reich” the connection between the writer and the people has already been restored; that the “third Reich” creates for “man” a “new attitude to things,” thanks to which a new, non-decadent art, a “steely Romanticism” has already become a reality (how can a new attitude toward “things” arise while maintaining capitalist production, this precisely constitutes the secret of the myth). In a word, Rosenberg mythically prophesied that the “third Reich” would destroy decadence, and Goebbels dictatorially decrees that it has already been destroyed.

If you take a closer look at these contradictions, you get a completely different picture. Rosenberg sketches the “ideal of racial beauty” and “recognition of the aesthetic waves,” “inner dynamics” and “volitional orientation” of Nordic art. The first thesis is an eclectic

mishmash of the views of Kant, Houston Stewart Chamberlain and Spengler. To the subjective-idealistic theory of Kant, to the doctrine of the “general validity (subjective) of aesthetic judgment,” the “theory of blood and race” is simply soldered, asserting that this “general validity” applies only to a given race. This is Spengler’s ultra-relativistic theory, a complete denial of all objectivity, only with that new shade, that this relativism is based not on Spengler’s “culture cycles,” but on race – an eternal, unchanging and incomparable “distinctive feature” of “blood.” In the second paragraph, Rosenberg borrows from the art history of the predecessors of Expressionism (Riegl and especially Wilhelm Worringer) their theory of the “dynamic” essence of Gothic and Baroque and adapts it to the agitational needs of fascism, to the need for means of influence based on mass hypnosis and mass suggestion, on the irrational awakening of all the instincts of the backward petty-bourgeois masses.

The myth of overcoming decadence in the “third Reich” hides the same literary decadence of the era of monopoly capitalism, albeit of a deteriorated quality. Fascists can only lie about some of their new literature. Indeed, they cannot in any way create a new literature when all the social foundations of artistic decline are preserved in an intensified form.

This contradiction between the loud proclamation of a new cultural “flourishing” and the intensified support of decaying capitalism manifests itself, of course, very clearly in all of Rosenberg’s critical judgments. He throws thunder and lightning against the empty individualism of bourgeois-liberal literature, attacks the “vile Jew” Heine, Gerhart Hauptmann who “*only gnaws at the rotten roots of the 19th century*,” Thomas Mann, etc. Rosenberg finds in the “common blooded Nordic Germanic man’s sense of loneliness” an essential feature that distinguishes “Aryan” art. He says: “*The Faustian man (also rented from Spengler – G. L.) penetrates into the infinite, profoundest depths, but he is essentially solitary ... But that is only possible because he experiences inwardly an immortality unique only to himself. He elevates himself from an environment as a person, because he is personality.*” [1] And Rosenberg glorifies (with some embarrassment) Dostoyevsky and especially Richard Wagner as living embodiments of this “feeling of loneliness.” But if you simplify these grandiloquent phrases a little (not too much, just a little), then behind them you immediately discover the “eternal values” of Alfred Kerr, the critical points of view of Alfred Polgar, the literary motives of Georg Kaiser or Robert Musil – in a word, the aesthetic principles of liberal-Jewish “asphalt literature,” decadent “bastard art.”

And it is not surprising, therefore, that the aesthetics of the fascists suddenly passes from demagogic agitation to the theory of “art for art’s sake” of the decadent bourgeoisie. When Rosenberg feels some embarrassment about his praises of Dostoyevsky’s heroes as bright “distinctive” images, he saves himself into the area of “formal evaluation.” “*To us, not individual heroes and victims are dearest, but the creative force that created them.*” And Goebbels supplements the empty demand for “tendentious art” in his mouth with a principle borrowed from Berlin writers: “*art means skill.*”

These contradictions must also be reconciled by the fascist myth. Art should replace religion. “*Art as religion*,” says Rosenberg, “*was once Wagner’s goal.*” Intoxicated by the opium of this new religion, the bourgeoisie should be hypnotized so that in his “feeling of loneliness,” as an ideological reflection of the persisting monopoly capitalist system, he also illusorily experiences “unity with the people.”

Such hypnosis cannot, of course, last. The real social contradictions and their stark contrast with the demagogy of fascism must come out. This is inevitable in the field of literature as well. Rosenberg’s aesthetics is nothing more than a magnificent, but

internally rotten facade, with which they try to hide these contradictions from the backward, bewildered petty bourgeois.



As in other ideological areas, the task of creating a fascist “worldview” in the field of literary theory and aesthetics was undertaken mainly by the ideologue of German fascism, Rosenberg. And as in other areas, his “contribution” lies only in the fact that he eclectically glues the most reactionary bourgeois and landlord ideas into a national “socialist” racial “theory.”

Rosenberg does not create and cannot create any scientific literary theory. As in other ideological areas, to Rosenberg belongs only the fact that he introduces racial “theory” into aesthetics and makes it the basis of all interpretation of literature and art. We have already seen that the openly anti-Semite Adolf Bartels also wielded racial theory. But for the needs of the fascizing bourgeoisie, Bartels’ views were slightly elementary, simple-minded. This required a much larger dose of lies, deceit and poison, in comparison with which pre-war anti-Semitism was not a sufficient remedy. Therefore, Rosenberg was forced, on the one hand, to support and preserve this concept of Bartels in its primitive rudeness, since it corresponded to the level of a chauvinist petty bourgeois, but at the same time to correspondingly modernize it on the basis of the fascization process that bourgeois philosophy has gone through (Spengler, Klages, Baeumler, etc.). At the same time, some principles were borrowed from expressionism and from “New Objectivity.” This is how Rosenberg’s “system” arose, which is even more eclectic and simply incoherent and is even more reactionary than the tendencies of its predecessors, which it unites.

The starting point of Rosenberg’s “aesthetics” is the “racial” ideal of beauty. He sees this ideal as a new discovery of national “socialism.” He says: *“Almost all the philosophers who wrote about the aesthetic state or about assessments in art, ignored the fact of the existence of a racial ideal of beauty. This ideal relates to the physical appearance of the racial types and to the race’s supreme value.”* [2] References to the role of race in the history of ideology, however, are nothing new. Plekhanov also pointed out that these links are old rubbish and are used *“to stop research exactly where it should have started. Why is the history of French poetry different from the history of poetry in Germany? For a very simple reason: the temperament of the French people was such that they could not have either Lessing, or Schiller, or Goethe. Well, thanks for the explanation; now we understand everything!”* [3] The reasoning of the fascist racialists in Germany is below the level of even this kind of explanation, representing the most terrifying anti-Semitism. He illustrates the key to solving all the mysteries of art and literature of the past and present, which Rosenberg has found, with the example that in Homer and in other works of Greek poetry, heroes and gods are presented in the form of blondes.

“But in the person of Thersites there appears a hostile, misshapen traitor, appeared to confront the blind hero. Clearly Thersites was the embodiment of the hither Asiatic spies in the Greek army. These traitors were the forerunners of our Berlin and Frankfurt pacifists.” [4] To characterize the boundless ignorance and impudence with which Rosenberg resolves historical problems, let us cite here the part where he declares Socrates an international social democrat; *“Socrates lived after the collapse of the Athenian racial democracy, hence he was an international social*

democrat of his day." [5] The whole book of Rosenberg is teeming with such pearls. It is an indication of the level at which all fascist literature is located.

The whole history of mankind is portrayed by the fascists in a perverted form, in the form of a racial struggle. In order to prevent the indignation of the petty bourgeois from turning against their real enemy, against monopoly capitalism, it is being incited against the "Jews," in reality against all working people, against the proletariat. The fascists, thereby revealing the class character of their demagoguery and lies, revile first of all Marxists, communists, those who are for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The decisive feature of the Jewish "race" according to this "theory" is, of course, materialism. "Jewish art" is never a personal or truly objective style, but reveals only technical and subjective skill oriented towards external action: in most cases it is associated with gross sensory influences, if not entirely imbued with an immoral attitude. An example is the literature of all Jews, *"starting with revenge-breathing psalms, which only because of Luther's poetic treatment often sound so beautiful ... and ending with the vile Heinrich Heine."* [6]

This Black-Hundred anti-Semitic "pogrom aesthetics" of "racial beauty" is attached to Kantian aesthetics with the help of completely sophistic methods. It goes without saying that the extreme subjectivist and mystifier Rosenberg is unable to see anything objective in art either; he examines only the general significance of judgments of taste and at the same time joins some of Kant's propositions. He accepts Kant's "expediency without a goal," formulating it much more formally and subjectively than Kant himself does, and adding the racial moment as a "real basis": *"Judgment of taste follows only from the racial popular ideal of beauty and applies only to those circles that consciously or unconsciously carry the same idea of beauty in their hearts."*

Rosenberg develops Kant in the direction of obscurantist mystical relativism. Already neo-Kantianism, as Lenin repeatedly argued, "cleansed" Kant of all his vacillations towards materialism. Rosenberg dresses Kant in a brown uniform.

But within the boundaries of the only creative "Aryan cultural world" Rosenberg still needs to assign a special place for German art and literature. He does this through a crudely eclectic unification and vulgarization of bourgeois theories of art of the imperialist era. He summarizes this briefly as follows: *"Beauty, conditioned by type, as an external static of the Nordic race is what is Grecian, while the racially peculiar beauty as an inner dynamic is the spiritual adjustment of the Nordic west."* [7] Here Worringer's "theory" of the Gothic and Spengler's "Faustian circle of culture" are "united." To the spiritual property of Rosenberg himself belongs only that truly clownish example, with which he illustrates the opposite within the framework of the "racial beauty of the north": *"The face of Pericles and the head of Frederick the Great are two symbols of the range of the racial soul and the ideal of beauty, originally identical in the racial sense."* Rosenberg did not find anything better than the physiognomy of "old Fritz" to characterize his "Germanic" ideal of beauty.

Rosenberg takes "aesthetic will" as the basis of aesthetics. *"The denial of this will is perhaps the most shameful page in German aesthetics."* This theory of will, on the one hand, allows him to find in Kant the Romantic theory of polarity and leads him through the theory of "polarity of subject and object" (a concept that also brings Rosenberg closer to Machism) back to Schopenhauer. It goes without saying that Rosenberg's "soul" is very close to the epistemology of subjective idealism, as well as the mystical-irrationalist theory of will. But it is interesting that Rosenberg, when analyzing Schopenhauer's theory of will, encounters difficulties that arise for the fascist "theory of activity." Based on the needs of

fascist terror and demagogy, Rosenberg emphasizes the importance of will, activity, dynamics. However, he perfectly understands that the real activity of the masses would inevitably bring in the end the death of fascism. Therefore, he corrects Schopenhauer by distinguishing between will and instinct. Will is something idealistically supersensible, instinct is something purely sensible. And man is the polar unity of these two principles. *“Will is always the opposite of attraction and is not identical with it.”* [8]

Will is the opposite of every striving directed solely towards self-preservation, on the contrary, instinct “denotes the essence of egoism.” Here we again encounter the well-known scheme of fascist demagogy. Rosenberg distinguishes between will and instinct, just as he distinguishes between “creative” and “predatory capital,” between an Aryan and a Semitic man of an inferior breed, between a national “socialist” “people’s community” and “Judeo-liberal Marxism.” Rosenberg’s “aesthetics” exalts the supersensible will as the basis of “heroic realism,” sacrificial devotion to the “people’s community.” Fascism fights with fire and sword, with the help of a torture chamber and a concentration camp, against “egoism,” against the “purely sensual instinct of the masses,” that is, their resistance to wage slavery. Fascism screams demagogically about “workers’ greed” (as Ley puts it), suppressing the struggle of workers against the reduction of already miserable wages. Fascism wants to throw the workers into a meat grinder, a new imperialist war, and force them to sacrifice themselves to increase the profits of finance capital. Hence the phrases about heroism etc.. Rosenberg does not even have a shadow of a scientific method of proof, for he replaces science with “myth.” Following the general agitational methods of fascism, he clothed his “theories” in the form of high-flown proclamations. The function of the will, Rosenberg writes, is to solve the central problem of “National Socialist aesthetics”: *“to survive the myth and create the new type of person.”* Thus, according to the fascist recipe, one unprovable nonsense is happily “proved” with the help of another nonsense.

It is quite characteristic that Rosenberg is trying to find in Schopenhauer a weapon to disguise the fascist lies in art as realism. *“Schopenhauer stands between dogmatic realism and dogmatic idealism. He took his starting point neither from the subject nor from the object”* [9] Rosenberg goes on to declare his intention to fight both idealism and naturalism. *“The customary division into an idealistic and naturalistic style is neither formally enlightening nor otherwise revealing. Germanic art has always been both. European art was never idealising in the saccharine sense familiar to us. It was never anxious to avoid or to soften nature. The formative path of western artists lay far more through nature, and before nature was finally surpassed it had been given ruthless expression.”* [10] This pseudo-realist disguise of reactionary idealism in Rosenberg is very transparent. It rests on the mystical identification of art and nature in the spirit of the “philosophy of life,” the first traces of which were already encountered in the views of representatives of German naturalism. The fascist ideologist Möller van den Bruck, who later gained great influence, formulated this philosophical turn towards pseudo-realism, which at the same time is complete mysticism, already in the pre-war period. “Activism,” myth-making, the social and national demagogy of fascism inevitably lead to the central slogan put forward by the Rosenbergs and Goebbels that art becomes “dynamic” embodiment of myth, “steely Romanticism.”

Rosenberg’s aesthetics is a propaganda of racial chauvinism and imperialist ideology, using Bartels’ old homegrown anti-Semitism and the extremely subjective modern literary theories of the déclassé intelligentsia of the post-war era. In his “concept” of Nordic Germanic art, a frank recognition of modern decadence and a hypocritical praise of

ancient Germanic virtues, courage, heroism, honor and loyalty are mixed into a hysterical praise of the religious nature of art.

Therefore, we cannot be surprised by the fact that Rosenberg, almost like the liberal-bourgeois writers against whom he fiercely fights on other occasions, sees the essence of German art in a feeling of loneliness. He writes: *“The feeling of loneliness and infinity is undoubtedly also a sign of the Western spirit.”* From this he comes to an extremely enthusiastic assessment of Dostoyevsky’s types. But amid this ecstasy, he suddenly discovers that these heroes and their actions do not at all correspond to the “racial” Nordic Germanic ideal, by no means are they the embodiment of the ideal of “honor and loyalty.” He saves himself from this contradiction by throwing himself into theory, into “art for art’s sake” without looking back. So, he summarizes his thoughts about Dostoyevsky as follows: *“Aliosha, Dimitri or Ivan Karamasov do not interest me so much as the strength which motivated each of them through the organic creation, visible through human creative nature which makes its way into our heart. If I am to regard these figures as a life ideal, then it is a completely different matter.”* [11] This confession of Rosenberg vividly exposes all the falsity of his “aesthetics.” First, it turns out that his entire so-called struggle against the “bourgeois decadence” of the literature of big cities is only a demagogic phrase, since he himself, with all his aesthetics, is mired head over heels in the same decadence and is its typical representative. Rosenberg’s “struggle” against “bourgeois decadence” is a “model” of fascist “anti-capitalist” phraseology. This phraseology is essentially a defense of decaying monopoly capitalism with the help of a masquerade of “criticism” of culture. Secondly, this recognition exposes the value of Rosenberg’s “aesthetic will”: as soon as Rosenberg turns to any particular phenomenon from the world of art, he is forced to resort to the same reactionary and very vulgar concept of art for art’s sake, to which he first declares the most “decisive” war. Third, this collection of superficially glued contradictory statements is the inevitable ideological costume of fascist ideology: “German realism,” The “German honor and loyalty” of the warriors in the future imperialist slaughter flourishes best in this mystical fog impenetrable by thought. “Heroic realism” in the literary field is primarily a phrase that obscures the consciousness of the masses through the propaganda of blind obedience and readiness to become a victim of a new bloody imperialist massacre, which is being prepared by German fascism. Baeumler’s “political soldier” is the same Prussian soldier brought up in blind discipline, trained by national and social demagogy and bridled to oppose his own interests. The only difference is that its ideological processing is carried out, in accordance with the changed conditions, by new methods. Fascism demands “heroism” from the working masses in everyday life: to work “heroically” for the capitalists, not to worry about wages, tax burden and other similar vulgar things, worthy only of a “man of a lower nature,” to subordinate “personal benefit” to “general benefit,” but in reality the class interests of working people to the interests of monopoly capital – this is the class essence of fascist phrases about “heroism.” The hymn sung by Rosenberg to Knut Hamsun’s kulak novel “Growth of the Soil” is an example of the propaganda of this kind of “heroism”: *“No one knows why, with great effort, the farmer Isak cultivates one piece of land after another in godforsaken regions, or why his wife has joined him and gives birth to his children. But Isak follows an inexplicable law. He carries on a fruitful quest out of a mystical primal will. At the end of his existence he will certainly look back in astonishment at the harvest of his activity. The Growth of the Soil is the great present day epic of the Nordic will in its eternal primordial form. Nordic man can be heroic even behind the wooden plough.”* [12]

All the contradictions of Rosenberg’s “theory of aesthetics” find with him a very simple “solution” in the requirement of the religious character of art. He again completely forgets

about his own purely aesthetic hobbies and makes the following “judgment” on the entire development of modern art. *“So Europe then went down and physically subjugated the world and universe. But the spiritual search, which was not truly religious, but only Roman Jewish, displaced the equilibrium of the religious and artistic will.”* [13] The desire to escape from this situation is clearest of all, as Rosenberg thinks, in Richard Wagner, who partially achieved salvation. *“Wagner yearned for folk art as a symbol. The common origin of the divided arts heralded a new era for him ... Art as a religion – this is what Wagner once desired. Alongside Lagarde, he alone fought against the entire bourgeois world of the Alberichs, imbued with the spirit of capitalism, and he felt within himself, along with talent, the mission of serving his people ... He wanted to create a new world and anticipated the dawn of a newly emerging life.”* Thus, the reactionary Romanticism of Wagner, which at one time even Nietzsche strongly ridiculed, becomes for Rosenberg the highest point of all previous development of European art and, at the same time, the predecessor of fascist religious art.

Here, too, fascism unites all the most reactionary tendencies of the previous period of development of bourgeois art, turning them into barbaric buffoonery. The ugliest scenes from the performances of Parsifal at the Wagnerian Theater in Bayreuth are far surpassed by the obscurantist stage plays of the Third Reich.

From the standpoint of racism and anti-Semitism, Rosenberg rejects modern literature. His “criticism,” as we could already see from his remarks about Heine, is part of the social demagoguery of German fascism. *“The world city has begun its work of destroying the race. Night cafes of the asphalt man turned into workshops for artists, theoretical bastard dialectics became a prayer that accompanies all emerging ‘currents.’ There was chaos of Germans, Jews, people of the street who were alienated from nature. The result was the art of mestizos.”* From this “position” Rosenberg rejects all modern literary development – Thomas Mann, Gerhard Hauptmann and others. But it is very characteristic that his unconditional judgment of condemnation applies only to naturalism and to the later layers of realistic literature. True, he has phrases directed against Expressionism, but at the same time he recognizes in it an “honest search.”

And for the “New Objectivity” he even finds pathetic phrases, sees in it the beginning of a new style. On the other hand, he adopts from Bartels the idealization of the later provincial Romanticism – Raabe, Storm, Mörike, etc. He gives positive feedback only about three modern writers – about the German fascists Hans Grimm and Erwin Guido Kolbenheyer, and about the irrational and kulak novel by Knut Hamsun *“Growth of the Soil.”*

This eclectic mixture of conflicting trends and ideas reflects the heterogeneity of the mass basis of fascism. Demagogic attempts to reduce conflicting class interests by means of agitational methods to a single denominator constitute the only “theoretical contribution” of German fascism to date. Hitlerite fascism, which reached power, brought the bourgeois theory of literature to the last line of reaction and obscurantism. The conflicting ideas that Rosenberg glued together often clashed in separate discussions. A particularly strong struggle was fought over the question of the value of expressionism as a heritage inherited by fascism. Petty-bourgeois youth, dissatisfied with the fact that the Hitler regime did not fulfill its charlatan promises, sometimes saw expressionism as a means of expressing their disappointed hopes, to express the petty-bourgeois ideology of the “second revolution.” Rosenberg once referred to expressionist supporters as *Otto Strasser’s thugs in art*. However, the general line of literary theory here goes in the direction of sophistic “reconciliation” and “resolution” of contradictions. In

expressionism, the official fascist literary historian Linden wants to sharply separate “*the spiritually healthy people like Trakl, Stadler, Heym from fake stutterers and people of feigned ecstasy.*” ^[14] In the same way, Professor Schardt fights against all realism as a non-German phenomenon and saves expressionism by turning it into an eternal category of “Gothic-Faustian will to the infinite.” The line of this expressionism goes from Walther von der Vogelweide and Naumburg plastics through Grunewald to Stefan George, Nolde and Barlach. Linden also perpetuates expressionism and dilutes it with his “theory” of literature: “*Poetry is a transformed expression of the experience of community arising from a religious source.*” The poet is the prophet of humanity and especially the prophet of his people; his defining inner experience is a meeting with the great destinies of his people and the divine spirit of the world that opens up in them.

The departure from realism is manifested here in the most extreme degree; artistic depiction of reality gives way to loud and deceitful fascist propaganda, and all history and literature are perverted in the spirit of this “racial art” of the “Germanic world.” Goebbels arrives at the same eclectic solution. He approaches the question “historically.” “*Expressionism had healthy layers, since the epoch itself had something expressionistic in it.*” ^[15] Goebbels finds something correct in “New Objectivity.” He also completely discards only naturalism, which “has degenerated into a depiction of the environment and into a Marxist ideology.” Thus, in fascist literary theory and literary practice, barbaric unscrupulousness prevails, in which, however, the political line is betrayed by a complete rejection of all realism.

Notes

1. Rosenberg, *Myth of the Twentieth Century*, p. 279.
 2. *Ibid.*, p. 214.
 3. Plekhanov, *Selected Works*, Vol. VIII, p. 256.
 4. Rosenberg, *Myth of the Twentieth Century*, p. 217.
 5. *Ibid.*, p. 218.
 6. *Ibid.*, p. 264.
 7. *Ibid.*, p. 222.
 8. *Ibid.*, p. 247.
 9. *Ibid.*, p. 240.
 10. *Ibid.*, p. 254.
 11. *Ibid.*, p. 291.
 12. *Ibid.*, p. 307.
 13. *Ibid.*, p. 310.
 14. Linden. *Aufgaben einer nationalen Literaturwissenschaft*, Munchen 1933, page. 52.
 15. Goebbels. *Address to Writers and Artists*, May 9, 1933.
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